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For Immediate release - September 20, 2012

GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES ATTORNEY DAVID MEIER TO LEAD DRUG LAB CENTRAL OFFICE

Former assistant district attorney & current partner at Todd & Weld LLP responsible for expediting review of cases impacted by lab failures

BOSTON – Thursday, September 20, 2012 – Governor Deval Patrick today announced that Attorney David Meier will lead the central office established to oversee the review of criminal cases potentially impacted by failures at the Department of Public Health Drug Lab. The Governor, working alongside district attorneys and defense counsel, proposed standing up a central office to expedite the identification of individuals whose cases involved evidence that may have been mishandled by the former chemist.

"With his extensive experience on both sides of the bar and proven commitment to the fair administration of justice in the Commonwealth, David Meier is the perfect person to undertake this critical task," said Governor Patrick. "The central office will serve as the clearinghouse for all information so that we can fully understand the universe of cases we're dealing with and see that justice is done."

Meier is a partner at Todd & Weld LLP and specializes in the areas of criminal defense and government investigations. Prior to joining the firm, he served for over 20 years as a prosecutor in Middlesex and Suffolk County, including 12 years as the Chief of Homicide in the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, supervising the investigation, prosecution and trial of all Boston homicides.

"I am grateful for the confidence the Governor and our colleagues in the criminal justice system have placed in me," said Meier. "We will approach our review with an eye toward thoroughness and speed, mindful that our overriding goal is to identify each and every individual who may have been affected so that all parties may determine the appropriate next steps."

Governor Patrick proposed a central office in coordination with the District Attorney's Association and defense bar last week. It is just one in a series of responsive and corrective steps taken since investigators informed the Administration a chemist admitted mishandling evidence at different points throughout her nine year career. The Governor ordered the lab's immediate closure on August 29th. Since then, the Administration has been in daily contact with effected parties, urging collaboration and reiterating the Governor's commitment to preventing the miscarriage of justice, assigning accountability and restoring integrity to the lab's work.

Meier, who begins immediately, will receive the necessary personnel and financial resources to stand up the central office. The office will be responsible for cross referencing case files from prosecutors and defense attorneys with drug sample, docket number and other identifying information held by DPH, the Trial Courts, the Departments of Correction, Parole, Probation and Youth Services, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the U.S. Attorney's Office and other federal partners. Staff will prioritize the review of defendants who are currently incarcerated and, at the conclusion of their work, supply the state with a comprehensive and accurate list of impacted cases. The list will inform next steps for attorneys and the courts as well as give the Administration and Legislature a better understanding of supplemental funding requirements.

Meier has been a trial attorney for over 20 years and is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and has been recognized as among the best in his field by Massachusetts Super Lawyers and Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly. His practice includes matters investigated and prosecuted in state and federal courts and by local District Attorneys' Offices, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and the United States Attorney's Office. In 2007, Meier was recognized by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly as a "Lawyer of the Year," and was cited for "working behind the scenes to seek justice for victims and their families, as well as those who had been wrongfully convicted."

"David Meier is a fine choice to head this working group. His experience both as a prosecutor and now a member of the defense bar gives him the right perspective for this task," said District Attorney Michael O'Keefe. "We hope this step, in what will be a process, will produce the kind of information District Attorneys across the Commonwealth need to better identify cases affected by

the failures at the DPH laboratory."

"I support the Governor's selection of Attorney David Meier to oversee the incredible amount of work that lies ahead for all of us who will be participating in identifying those whose cases have been tainted by the problems at the William Hinton State Lab," said Anthony Benedetti, Chief Counsel of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS). "Over the years Attorney Meier has done outstanding work in helping individuals who have been wrongfully convicted. I and my staff at CPCS look forward to working with him and others who are committed to righting this wrong."

The Administration has taken swift personnel actions in response to the lab's failings. Effective the week of September 10, the lab bureau chief resigned, the division director was terminated and disciplinary proceedings began against the lab supervisor, who is a member of civil service. This week, Governor Patrick accepted the resignation of DPH Commissioner Auerbach.

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